

# Building Blocks to Safety

*A newsletter for prevention of childhood injuries.*



North Dakota Department of Health

Fall 1999

Division of Maternal and Child Health

## Lawn and Garden Care Dangers

Each year about 320,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries relating to various lawn and garden tools. About 75 people are killed and about 20,000 are injured on or near riding lawnmowers and garden tractors. One out of every five deaths involves a child. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that most of the deaths to children occurred when a child was in the path of a moving mower. Young children move quickly and are attracted to mowing activity, but they don't understand the dangers it poses. Parents should keep young children away from any outdoor power equipment.



### **CPSC recommends the following tips for lawn and garden safety:**

- Children should never be in the yard while you're mowing and they should never ride on the mower. More than 800 young children get run over or backed over by riding mowers each year.
- Never assume children will remain where you last saw them. Use extra care when backing up or going around corners, shrubs, trees or other obstacles.
- Many children suffer serious burns to their hands and arms when they touch the hot muffler of running or recently running engines.
- Be sure you know how to operate the equipment.
- Dress appropriately for the job. This includes sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles, long pants and long-sleeved shirts, close-fitting clothes, eye protection, heavy gloves, hearing protection when needed and no jewelry, which can get caught in moving parts.
- Before mowing, walk around the area in which you will be working to remove any objects like sticks, glass, metal, wire, stones and string that could cause injury.
- Never work with electric power tools in wet or damp conditions.
- Before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts, unplug electric tools and disconnect spark plug wires on gasoline-powered tools.
- Be sure that power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended.
- Handle gasoline carefully. Never fill gas tanks while machinery is operating or when equipment is still hot.

# Home Playground Safety Tips

Every year in the United States, about 200,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms for playground equipment related injuries. An estimated 148,000 of these injuries involve public playground equipment and an estimated 51,000 involve home playground equipment. Also, about 15 children die each year as a result of playground equipment related incidents. Most injuries to children are the result of falls.

**Below are brief tips to ensure home playground safety:**

**1. Protective Surfacing --** Since almost 60 percent of all injuries are caused by falls to the ground, protective surfacing under and around all playground equipment can reduce the risk of serious head injury. Falls on asphalt and concrete can result in serious head injury and death. Do not place playground equipment over these surfaces. Also, grass and turf lose their ability to absorb shock through wear and environmental conditions.

**Fall height in feet from which a life-threatening head injury would not be expected:**

Type of Material	6" Depth	9" Depth	12" Depth
Double-Shredded Bark Mulch	6	10	11
Wood Chips	7	10	11
Fine Sand	5	5	9
Fine Gravel	16	17	10

**2. Use Zones --** Use of protective surfacing around and under equipment where a child might fall is essential. This area should be free of other equipment and obstacles onto which a child might fall. Stationary climbing equipment and slides should have a use zone extending a minimum of 6 feet in all directions from the perimeter of the equipment. Swings should have a use zone extending a minimum of 6 feet from the outer edge of the support structure on each side. The use zone in front and back of the swing should extend out a minimum distance of twice the height of the swing as measured from the ground to the swing hangers on the support structure.

**3. Swing Spacing --** To prevent injuries from impact with moving swings, swings should not be too close together or too close to support structures.



**Swing spacing should be:**

- At least 8 inches between suspended swings and between a swing and the support frame.
- At least 16 inches from swing support frame to a pendulum seesaw.
- Minimum clearance between the ground and underside of swing seat should be 8 inches.
- Swing sets should be anchored securely.

**4. Elevated Surfaces --** Platforms more than 30 feet above the ground should have guardrails to prevent children from falling.

**5. Potential Head Entrapment Hazards --** Openings that are between 3 1/2 inches and 9 inches present a head-entrapment hazard because they are large enough to permit a child's body to go through but are too small to permit the head to go through.

**6. Potential Entrapment and Strangulation**

**Hazards --** Open "S" hooks, especially on swings, and any protrusions or equipment component hardware which may act as hooks or catch-points can entangle with children's clothing and cause strangulation. Close "S" hooks as tightly as possible, and eliminate protrusions or catch-points on playground equipment.

**7. Pinch or Crush Points --** There should be no exposed moving parts that may present a pinching or crushing hazard.

**8. Playground Maintenance --** Playgrounds should be inspected on a regular basis. Inspect protective surfacing, especially mulch, to maintain the proper depth. For more information on playground safety, refer to the CPSC's "Handbook for Public Safety." To obtain a copy, write to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington D.C. 20207.

# Recall on Pisces Baby Cribs

In cooperation with the CPSC, Generation 2 Worldwide is recalling about 6,600 Next Generation Pisces Cribs. The slats on the headboards and footboards of these cribs can come loose, creating a large opening between the slats. CPSC standards limit the space between side rail slats to no more than 2 3/8 inches. Spacing larger than this enables an infant to become entrapped in the side rails, which can result in serious injury or death.

Cribs with model number 67-8100 are being recalled. The model number and date of

manufacturing can be found on a sticker at the bottom of the headboard. The wooden crib has a high headboard and footboard with the middle two slats joined in a small arch underneath the top rails. The drop side rail of the crib has the "NEXT GENERATION" brand name stamped in gold-colored letters. Retail stores and juvenile furniture stores nationwide sold these cribs from March 1997 to December 1998.

Consumers should immediately stop using these recalled cribs until repairs have been performed. Next Generation 2 Worldwide is



offering consumers replacement endboards with instructions and the necessary tool for replacement. To order the repair kit, call 800.736.1140 extension 224.

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# Rawlings Recalls Softball Bats

The CPSC and Rawlings Sporting Goods Company are recalling about 45,000 slow-pitch softball bats. The tops of the bats can shear off during use, posing an injury hazard to batters and bystanders. The bats subject to this recall are Rawlings slow-pitch aluminum softball bats with model numbers SBZ2, SBZ3, SBZ4, SBB4, SBB5, SBB6, SBB7, SPT-PK2 and DUAL-E. Rawlings and the model numbers can be found on the barrel of each bat. The bats are adult sized and come in various colors. Retailers – including Wal-Mart, Target, Kmart and sporting goods stores nationwide – sold the bats from September 1997 through May 1999. Consumers should stop using the recalled bats immediately and call Rawlings at 800.367.3455 for instructions on how to return the bats for a refund.



# Recall of Bike Helmets

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Bell Sports are recalling about 5,800 bicycle helmets used for BMX and downhill mountain biking. Defective chin strap rivets can result in the helmet coming off the rider's head in the event of a fall or crash. The helmets come in red, green, black, white and multicolored. They were sold under the model names Rhythm, Bellistic and Qualifier. The recalled helmets have date stickers inside reading October 1998 through March 1999. "BELL" is written on the sides of the helmets and on the visors. Independent bicycle dealers nationwide

sold these helmets from October 1998 through April 1999.

Consumers should stop using these helmets immediately until they are repaired or replaced. For free replacement helmets, including shipping costs, consumers should mail their helmets to Bell Sports Inc. For more information, call Bell Sports at 800.456. BELL.



Rhythm



Qualifier



Bellistic

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## Mountain Bikes Recalled

CPSC and Dynacraft Industries are recalling about 500 mountain bikes for repair. The recalled bikes are the Coleman CM 2100 men's and women's 21-speed mountain bikes purchased through June 15, 1998. Words "Coleman CM 2100" are written on the bike frame. The quick-release mechanism on the front wheel may be difficult to tighten sufficiently. The wheel could fall off while the bike is being ridden. Target stores nationwide sold the bikes from May 1998 through June 15, 1998. Consumers should stop riding these bikes immediately and should call Dynacraft Industries Inc. at 800.551.0032 to receive a free replacement quick-release mechanism.

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